"NOBLY PLANNED."

BY M. B. MANWELL, AUTHOR OF "THE BENTS OF BATTERSBY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER V.

"MR. RIGHT"?

WHEN Nell Cleeve looked up into the honest brown eyes bent so close to her face she remembered, spite of the wave of pain thrilling her, that they belonged to the new bank-manager, John Ponsonby. Of course, its own interests amply sufficed Brimsby, but yet the village could lend its ears, on occasion, to news from Albury, the nearest market town. When, therefore, John Ponsonby came to be the country bank's new manager, Brimsby knew all about the fact, and sat in judgment on the young man's looks and manners. That was, such of the village folk as had been over on banking business and made his acquaintance. The Cleeve girls, however, had not as yet met the newcomer. Their first sight of him, therefore, for Barbara and Anne of Cleves, was with their half-unconscious sister in his arms.

"What is it? What's the matter with our Nell?" wildly demanded Barbara, and even in that moment of excitement John Ponsonby, taking rapid stock of the girl, told himself that Barbara Cleeve was supremely beautiful.

"She has sprained her foot or ankle, I imagine," he said, gravely, when he had laid his burden on a sofa. "And," he added, "the first thing to do is to fetch a doctor. Shall I? Or perhaps you will send; it would be the quicker way, as I don't know how the land lies here."

But the doctor had been sent for, and was halfway to Lawyer Smythe's already. Teddy Smythe, throwing aside his banjo, had undertaken that office, and was puffing back in the wake of Doctor Finch before anyone else had realised the necessity for that good man's presence.

"Why, bless me, what's amiss?" fussed Dr. Finch. "Fallen downstairs, have you, my dear? Now, now, let us see what we can do!"

It was a bad sprain. The doctor, after hot fomentings, applied a lotion, and bandaged up the hapless foot. Then he had time to shake his head professionally, and talk wisely of torn ligaments and so on.

"How are we to get her home?" tearfully demanded Anne of Cleves.

Nell herself lay white and speechless from pain on the sofa.

"Oh, no, she can't possibly stay here all night, thank you!" said Barbara, in answer to Mrs. Smythe's suggested hospitality.

"I don't see much difficulty about that!" announced John Ponsonby, stepping, as seemed natural to him, once again into the breach.

Presently the stranger was busy arranging a chair on poles, in which the sufferer was speedily conveyed to the Round House by himself and Teddy Smythe.

That was how it all began.

Before many weeks were over, John Ponsonby was quite at home in the Cleeve circle. It had been but natural civility that he should find himself coming over frequently to inquire about the injured foot. Then, amusement had to be procured for the foot's owner, and the banker's modest library of fiction was set in motion, travelling in relays from Albury to Brimsby.

Nell's sweet, earnest eyes began to watch through the window that overlooked the gate, and her face to take on a listening expression. The girl was chained, meantime, to the sofa, and she secretly hugged to her heart the precious knowledge that the frequent visits and the books, and as time went on the posies of the flowers she specially loved, were all for her sake. The gates of Arcady were slowly, slowly swinging ajar for the girl, and passing fair looked the dream-country within to Nell's half-shy, half-longing eyes.

It had all been so purely accidental, this new acquaintance, that Brimsby, for a time, took it as simply natural, and to be expected. Even Miss Morley saw nothing in it to raise a sneer. The mild little Commander was the first to wake up to the fact that possibly the new bank-manager's anxiety regarding an ordinary sprain would have abated long since, had the sufferer not possessed an elder sister so fair that few men could look upon her without a thrill of admiration.

"That new fellow, Ponsonby, is a busybody, don't you think?" at last ventured the naval man to remark captiously. "Seems to me he comes over here most days of the week."

"Well, well!" Mrs. Smythe twirled her thumbs comfortably. "I think it is very nice of him, myself. Besides, a single man in lodgings is just a fish out of water, and Mr. Ponsonby seems to fancy our village. Rather a compliment preferring Brimsby to Albury town, isn't it?"

"Brimsby might go to the wall if Geoff Cleeve had the luck to be master of the Round House," said Miss Morley, with a click of her teeth.

Meantime, most of the summer evenings found the new bank-manager tramping over the stretch of moorland which was the shortest road from the market-town to Brimsby.

John Ponsonby was one of those men who stand out, solitary fashion. Throughout his thirty years of life he had never realised the meaning of the word home. The Ponsonbys were a decent stock, but they had dwindled down into this one representative of the name, an orphan from his early childhood. Some men there are whom such lack of kith and kin would have driven to the world's pleasures for comfort. Not so John Ponsonby. Of a calm, studious temperament, he devoted himself to the work providence had given him. His nature was so intensely truthful that it was, possibly, no great merit on his part to keep his feet straight, seeing he had no natural bias towards evil-doing. Rather had this man grown to make a sort of god of accuracy, even in the merest trifles; it was the outcome of his almost exaggerated passion for truthfulness. He was careful to shun aught that savoured of meanness; disgrace must not be suffered to touch even the hem of his garments—on that point John Ponsonby was sternly firm. For the rest, beneath a slight austerity he possessed a heart that was innately chivalrous to all women, whom he was apt to set on pedestals which they scarcely deserved. He was a well-read man, and in him was a faint sense of humour only waiting to be developed by that happiness which hitherto had passed him by.

With Nell Cleeve, John was at his best from the first. It might have been owing to the fact that his natural tenderness had a legitimate outlet in the accident by which he made her acquaintance; and which gave him a sort of proprietorship in the gentle, sweet-eyed girl who was for the time being an invalid. She was, in a sense, his special charge, seeing he had been the first to come to her aid. When he found himself, day by day, beside the sofa on which the girlish figure was established, John Ponsonby's whole being expanded. To Nell, he could speak out thoughts that were withheld from all others. Nell herself had the womanly grace of being a perfectly sympathetic listener, and the acquaintance between the two was rapidly cementing into a real friendship, if not something deeper.

Oddly enough, the possible meaning of these persistent visits on the part of a stranger, who had dropped into their lives from the clouds as it were, had not dawned upon Barbara nor Anne of Cleves.

"He is so nice and kind, isn't he, Barby?" said the latter, enthusiastically.

"Oh, yes, very!" Barbara responded, absently. She was day-dreaming, and the hero of her air-castles was a Prince Charming—not an ordinary bank-manager. The beautiful girl was eaten up with ambition, and, unhappily for herself, had an insatiable appetite for fiction of the most unreal sort.

"Don't you think, Barby, that he must have been quite handsome once?" continued Anne of Cleves, insistently keeping to the topic. In her youthful eyes John Ponsonby was quite middle-aged.

"Eh? Handsome!" Barbara started. "Oh, *dear* no! I don't admire such broad men, and he's so light-complexioned. My notion, now," she continued, musingly, "of a really good-looking man is a slender, tall figure with dark hair and eyes. But, Anne, how you talk! Mr. Ponsonby isn't old!"

"He's exactly thirty. I call that quite elderly," persisted Anne.

"You're a silly little thing! But old or young, he's extremely good-natured to come over here to amuse poor dear Nell."

Other eyes, however, saw farther than those of the sisters.

"What do you think Tweedy says?" Anne rushed into Barbara's room, a few days after, to ask. "Why, that perhaps it's 'Mr. Right' who is stepping this way

for Miss Nell! Don't you understand, Barby dear?"

"I understand," said the startled Barbara, severely, "that if Tweedy's an old goose, there's no need for you to be a young one!"

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CHAPTER VI.

"OPPORTUNITY MAKES THE THIEF."

GEOFF CLEEVE sat with his head buried in his hands. On the table beside him lay pipes and novels galore, but, for once, Geoff was not in the mood for either. He had been gradually getting deeper and deeper into a sea of debts, until at last things had reached a crisis.

"Something's got to be done!" groaned the unhappy youth. "It's a sin, nothing less, that I should be kept out of my rights by a set of simpering girls. Why on earth don't they marry? There's Barbara, a year older than myself, she's twenty-two. If they go on this way until they're thirty-five, what in creation is to become of me, I say?"

Geoff was sorely pressed for divers long-standing debts, but what harassed him most was what he called his debts of honour. Since we met him first, Geoff had added to his evil habits that of gambling—in a paltry way, but still it was gambling. To meet these debts the desperate youth was prepared to do almost anything. As he sat gloomily brooding over his hard fate in contrast to that of his sisters, a wave of impotent fury took possession of him. Alternately, he muttered and moaned, unheeding a repeated gentle tapping at the door, which at last quietly opened.

"Who's that?" Geoff turned fiercely. "Oh, I beg your pardon, Daisy; I thought it was the slavey." He rose heavily, as if forced against his will by his inborn sense of courtesy. It was Daisy Rivers, his landlady's daughter, who entered timidly, with a letter; and, noting the girl's air of simple refinement, one understood Geoff's impulsive act of respect. Ever since coming up to London, Geoff had lodged in the quiet house of a widow in reduced circumstances.

It is surprising how large a portion of the world loves to give itself out as reduced. As a matter of fact, one never encounters those who by any chance have risen from lower things.

There was no lamenting on the housetops in this case, however, over past-and-gone greatness. Meek Mrs. Rivers and her daughter Daisy were too reserved to air their ancestry on all or on any occasions. It is true, reticence is the prevailing rule in most London suburbs; still, there occur, even in those oyster-like communities, certain outlets when one can drag in allusions to past prosperity. Of such opportunities the Rivers, mother and daughter, had never availed themselves. Whatever might be their vicissitudes, they bore them with that unflagging resignation peculiar to the old-fashioned type of womanhood. Perhaps the quietude that reigned in their modest home stood them in good stead, for it never lacked the couple of lodgers who were its supporting pillars. One of these was Geoff Cleeve. Hitherto Geoff, with the better part of his nature uppermost, had paid his landlady pretty regularly. But of late, with her also, he had begun to be what he called "dipped."

"A letter for me, Daisy?" He stretched out his hand limply. Letters had come to mean but one thing to Geoff, and he shrank from them.

"You don't look over-well this evening, Mr. Cleeve!" The girl lingered, holding the door-handle and regarding the lodger with wistful eyes. She was of slender build, and her hair was of the copper tint that Titian loved so well; with it went the white, opaque skin, its usual accompaniment.

"'Well'? Who could be well in such a quandary as I've got into?" fiercely demanded Geoff. Then, breaking down in sheer need of sympathy, he broke out, "Oh, Daisy, I'm ruined—cleaned out!" Flinging himself back in his chair, he groaned and shut his eyes.

Lightly across his burning brow strayed her fingers soothingly as Daisy bent over him. They were no strangers these two, though actual, straightforward words of love had not yet been uttered. That, however, was Geoff's fault. Daisy had long since given her heart into the keeping of her mother's lodger, and none knew better than Geoff himself that it was so. But, true to his vacillating nature, he could not bring himself to be anchored down. He loved his freedom too well. Besides, was there not always Daisy there, when he chose to make brighter her wistful face by a tenderer tone or lingering hand-clasp? To do an honest, upright girl justice, the love-making had gone no further. But to see her Geoff—as she secretly considered him to be—in grave trouble was too much for the woman-heart. At all cost, she must comfort him.

"Can't you tell *me?*" she whispered in his ear.

"Oh, the old story!" groaned Geoff. "Debt, debt, debt! And now there's a man pressing me hard for a debt of honour—five-and-twenty pounds. How to get it I know not. I am simply maddened!"

"Five-and-twenty pounds!" echoed Daisy's soft, monotonous voice. "It's a tremendous sum! I haven't five-and-twenty shillings, nor has mother, or you should gladly have it."

"You're a good little thing, Daisy!" Geoff lazily imprisoned the straying fingers, and pressed them. It was his way of thanking, and Daisy's lip trembled. "And," went on Geoff, moodily, "there are heaps of other debts——" Suddenly he stammered, remembering for how many weeks he had pushed aside the neatly made-out bill that lay on his breakfast-table.

"Don't worry yourself about mother's account," hastily put in Daisy, intuitively guessing his thoughts. "Can't you borrow from somebody?" she suggested.

"Borrow, my dear girl!" Geoff laughed in a hollow fashion. "Why, every friend I've got I've tired out by begging."

"But I meant your sisters," timidly said Daisy. The girl shrank as a rule from speaking of Geoff's sisters, she scarce knew why.

"Borrow from the girls!" repeated Geoff. "Why, they only got enough doled out to keep themselves and the Round House going. If they had control over any sum it would be different——" He suddenly broke off, and sprang to his feet; he had remembered something. "Daisy, you're a dear, wise little woman! I'll take your advice. I'll get leave, and run down to Brimsby to-morrow, so don't expect me back to dinner."

* * * * * *

It was late in the dusk of an August evening when Geoff walked into the Round House, to the amaze of his three sisters.

"How are you all?" began he, with an attempt at careless cheeriness. "How's the sprain, Nell?"

"Oh, quite gone, dear old Geoff!—it's a matter of ancient history. How glad I am to see you, though!" Indeed, all the Cleeves were overjoyed to have Geoff in their midst. "Blood is thicker than water," if it be difficult, at times, to realise it.

But the joy was clouded before the evening closed. The story of Geoff's difficulties alarmed the girls into a state of mental paralysis. Debts! Even Barbara trembled, and through Nell's brain darted visions of police-constables pursuing her beloved brother with handcuffs. But Geoff found it a difficult task to make them understand the purport of his flying visit.

"We have nothing save the house-money," said Barbara; "and not much of that, for it's drawing near the end of the quarter. We pay our bills every week, Geoff, you know."

"More fools you!" silently commented the ne'er-do-well.

"Wouldn't Lawyer Smythe lend you the fifty pounds you say you must have?" inquired Anne of Cleves.

"No!" was the curt reply. Geoff remembered vividly the result of a former application to the close-fisted lawyer.

"Nobody else in Brimsby is likely to have such a sum, unless it's Miss Morley," said Nelly, anxiously.

"Pshaw!" burst out Geoff, impatiently. "Why should I go round begging from strangers when my own sisters have nothing to do but write out a cheque?"

"But didn't we tell you, Geoff," said Barbara, "that we have so little money in the house. There's certainly not over seven pounds."

"Have you really forgotten that money in the bank, Barbara?" said Geoff, slowly, and the streak of red in his cheek showed it cost him an effort to make the suggestive question.

"It's a tremendous pity that Mr. Ponsonby has gone off to Scotland for a few weeks. He might have lent you the money," hazarded Anne of Cleves, but nobody heeded her speech. Barbara and Nell were staring, with wild eyes, at Geoff, while his meaning slowly, slowly filtered through their minds.

"Geoffrey!" Barbara spoke at last, and with deliberation. "Don't you know that money was left by Uncle Phil for a special purpose?" The girl spoke bravely, but her beautiful face flushed from chin to brow at the remembrance of what that purpose was.

"None of you seem in any hurry to avail yourselves of it," Geoff said, with a hard laugh, and the colour deepened in the faces of his sisters, while Anne of Cleves, suddenly taking in the situation, flamed out impetuously—

"We could be married over and over again, if we chose! At least, Barbara and Nell can, Tweedy says so!"

"Little girls should be seen and not heard, I believe." Geoff coldly eyed his furious young sister. Then, turning to the elders, he resumed, persuasively, "Barbara, you know if you would but give me a cheque for fifty pounds it would make all things right. And it would be but a loan, which I should repay in time."

There was a silence in the room. Each of the sisters felt an uncontrollable longing for Uncle Phil's guiding hand. They were distracted and alarmed at the notion of drawing out money which they had not as yet come to look upon as their own property. Geoff furtively watched the struggle, between the fingers of the hand supporting his head.

"There's one thing," he said, huskily; "if you refuse to stretch out a helping hand to drag me 'out of the mire,' I'll either take the shilling or put a bullet through my head, that's all!"

"Oh, dear old Geoff! You want to break our hearts!" sobbed Nell, crossing the room to place her head on Geoff's shoulder.

"I'll do it! I shall lend you the fifty pounds, Geoff." Barbara impulsively sprang to her feet; her eyes were blazing with excitement, and her heart beat in heavy pants. The thought of Geoff rushing headlong to destruction by either modes was maddening. "There's an old cheque-book of Uncle Phil's I can get hold of," the girl continued rapidly, and both her sisters stood up breathless, carried away by Barbara's infectious excitement.

"You are a brick, dear old Barby!" Geoff ejaculated. "I knew that you would never see me done for. Fetch the cheque-book. The sooner it's done the better, and I can cash it at the Albury bank on my way to the station in the morning."

Presently, her sisters and Geoff were hanging over Barbara as she tremblingly filled up the cheque form.

"There, I've signed it in full," she said, a little triumphantly.

A strange light flickered in Geoff's eyes as he noted the untidy space Barbara had left between her figures and the sign "£." And she had also omitted to set down the sum sterling in words.

(*To be continued.*)

HOUSEHOLD DUTIES.

TEACH me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see;
And what I do in anything
To do it as for Thee.

All may of Thee partake:
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with this tincture, "for Thy sake,"
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold:
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told.

GEORGE HERBERT.

MOTHERS OF OTHER LANDS.

II.—THE MOTHERS OF RUSSIA.

BY B. McCALL-BARBOUR, AUTHOR OF "A FAMOUS MOTHER'S HYMN," ETC.

A Russian Mother.

"THE mothers of Russia" is a subject as large and complex as the country which they inhabit. The many territories of the vast Russian Empire have each their own peculiarities, and the mothers naturally share in them.

Little Russia differs from Greater Russia, and the south has its own peculiar characteristics and customs. Then there is another division made by class distinction—the rich, the poor, and the middle class.

Those sects comprising Cossacks, Tartars, Armenians, and a host of other types, along with these divisions of class, make the subject of the Russian mother a somewhat difficult one to deal with.

Perhaps we shall best attain our object if we confine ourselves to the peasant class of Russians, and take a glimpse at the general life and work of the mother in that sphere.

The Russian peasantry are pre-eminently children of the soil. The land is their heritage, and it is a characteristic mark of the race that all are workers on it. So much is this the case, that when property is left, it is not willed over to any favourite of the deceased, but falls by right to be divided amongst those who have wrought upon it, and those who have wrought longest and hardest get the largest share. The females are not exempt from these conditions, and this accounts for the fact that nearly all the women of the Russian peasantry, as well as the men, are outdoor workers.

This sharing according to merit in the property of the land is a stimulus towards its cultivation, and in consequence produces a race of hardy, healthy, strong, and generally happy women.

Connected with such rewards and being as it is one of the standing principles of the "tribe," instruction in manual labour in the soil is imparted as early as possible by the Russian mother to her offspring, so that with increasing years an increasing right may be acquired to the land and its produce.

The nature of the work is varied, and mothers and daughters take part in it as freely as fathers and sons. It is one of the commonest sights in Russia to see the women digging, sowing, hoeing, reaping, and engaging in all sorts of outdoor work. The field is the natural place for every Russian child to learn his or her "apprenticeship" in. They are put there almost immediately they are able to walk, and probably they never quit that class of work till they are grey-haired and worn out.

The hours of labour run from four in the morning till seven at night, and labourers receive an average wage of eightpence per day. The women, as a rule, are better workers than the men, and "go at it" as if they were born for no other purpose.

Such is the life to which the Russian girl is trained,

In a Russian Cottage.

and when she marries and becomes a mother, it is her chief desire to train her own offspring in the same principles of hardy toil. So, on the race goes, maintaining its reputation for strong and hardy men and women.

The arrangement of sharing the property of the village according to the share of work, puts the women of Russia on the same level with the men, and has in recent years been helpful in bringing about a better state of things than formerly existed. Not unfrequently the husbands were very cruel and harsh, and the horse-whipping of their wives was no unusual occurrence. That, however, is largely done away with, and the women are now on a better footing in many respects.

Although the circumstances which we have detailed may to some of us seem hard, they are not considered so amongst the Russian peasantry. Hard outdoor toil is their natural element, and therefore their highest state of enjoyment. Do not let it be supposed that because Russian women are thus subjected to a lot so hard they are consequently of a cold and hardened disposition. The mothers of the Russian peasantry have maternal affections as warm and sweet as any people in the world, and rear their little ones with a care that is most conscientious and exemplary.

Their hospitality, too, is of the very warmest sort. Indeed, this virtue is strongly advocated in their religion, which, not being pure Christianity, is what perhaps we might call the "next best thing"—a good humanity.

It is true that the religion of the Russians embraces many of the outstanding virtues of the Christian faith, such as brotherly love, forgiveness, and self-sacrifice for the sake of others; but what it lacks is "*inner life.*" It is these virtues, as inculcated by the Greek Church in its forms and ceremonies, which the Russian mother seeks to instil into her young ones' mind as religion, but the power of Jesus Christ as a living, personal Saviour is still a truth comparatively unknown in Russia.

It is the custom in Russia, when a child is baptised, to tie around its neck a small cross with a black ribbon. At baptism the child is dipped in the water three times, after which the priest takes a little oil, and dipping a feather into it, touches the child's eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet. After this ceremony, the cross with the black ribbon is fastened to the child's neck, and this is imagined to be a charm against all harm!

The houses of the Russian peasantry are mostly made of wood. In the centre of the room there is usually a built-up stove, round which the members of the family lie when they go to sleep. In winter time, which is very severe and protracted in Russia, a hotter quarter is required, and is usually found on the *top* of the stove, where the people lie wrapped up in their sheep-skins.

The cradle in which the Russian mother lays her baby is very much like that used in Sweden (see THE MOTHERS' COMPANION, January, page 5). It is made in the shape of an oblong box, and is suspended at the four corners by ropes fixed to the rafters of the roof, or from the end of a pole fixed in position like a fishing rod. From the bottom of the cradle hangs a loop of cord, into which the mother inserts her foot, and by an occasional motion keeps baby continually on the swing.

The dress of the peasant women is not by any means ornamental. It is usually made of a kind of rough flannel, and their gowns hang clumsily around their waist without any bands. The cloaks they wear are of sheep-skin with the wool inside, and the head-dress consists of a handkerchief passed over the head and tied under the chin. Perhaps the rough nature of the daily life of the women accounts largely for the plain and "unfashionable" style of their dress. Probably, they consider comfort and usefulness rather than "fashion."

One cannot look into the story of the lives of the Russian peasantry, and especially the story of its women, whether as mothers or daughters, without the prayer arising that they who have the making of that mighty Empire so largely in their hands may speedily be brought in touch with the Saviour of mankind and that "righteousness which alone exalteth a nation."

MOTHERS IN COUNCIL.

CONDUCTED BY MRS. E. M. WATERWORTH, AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AT HOME," ETC.

March 1st, 1895.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Thank you for all your kind letters. I am glad to be able to have helped any of you ever so little.

Yes, "MARIAN," you must begin again. Don't lose heart; it is the devil who whispers, "It is no use trying," simply because he does not wish you to try. You remember teaching your little boy to walk, don't you? and from what you say about him I am sure he is a dear little fellow. Well, what lots of tumbles he had! You stood at one end of the room once and told him to come to you. Down went the little chap on his hands and knees. "No, no!" you said; "Baby must walk, or he will never be able to do anything but crawl." Then the little man, encouraged by your words, got up on his feet and tried to come to you. He fell down two or three times, but you didn't say, "It's no use trying." And at last he reached your arms, and you smothered him with kisses, and never said a word about his tumbles, but called him your brave little boy.

Now, the very tenderest mother that ever lived is but hard-hearted compared to our dear Lord and Saviour. We are all little children in His sight. Some of us have learnt to walk aright, perhaps. Why? Because we feel our own utter weakness, and are content at last to lean hard on Him, and own that we have no strength or goodness of our own. Some of us would fain love and serve Him, and follow Him closely, and yet we can't. We mean to go to Him as your child meant to go to you, but our feet are tottery and we fall often by the way. Let us take courage. Our Saviour knows all our difficulties. He watches each trembling turn of our feet towards Him, and He is ready to raise us each time we fall, provided we call to Him for help. Our life, if we are honest with ourselves, we must all own to be made up of fresh beginnings. Begin again, "MARIAN," begin again; perhaps this time you will have learnt the

reason of your previous failures, and will know that as you have "no strength or goodness, no wisdom" of your own, you must cling the closer to Him who is all strength, all goodness, and all knowledge.

* * * *

"ANNIE B." wants to know where she ought to go for the best patterns for herself and her children. There are two or three very well-known firms who supply them, but on the whole I prefer Butterick and Co., Regent Street. Their prices may be somewhat higher than their neighbours', but even this I doubt. Of one thing I am certain, that Butterick's patterns are far and away the easiest to put together, if you will only take time and patience to read the directions carefully. Let me give you one hint, however—always order a year older for children than the actual age for which you want to make the garment. My youngsters are by no means big for their age, but I have found this a necessary precaution.

* * * *

"PRUDENCE" asks for some new way of warming up meat. She has made hashes, minces, and shepherd's pies until she feels that she never wants to see another. If it is the remains of beef that you want to use, mince it and mix with an equal quantity of sausages, first removing the skins. Add about a quarter of the amount of fine breadcrumbs, and boiled rice. Mix with an egg well-beaten; press the whole into a shape or basin, then turn it out on a baking tin and put it in the oven long enough to thoroughly cook the sausages. Serve with a little gravy. This makes a capital supper dish.

If it is mutton that you want to use up, boil some macaroni carefully till tender. Line a basin with it, put in the meat cut in slices, and cover with tomatoes, cabbage, or any vegetable you like, being careful not to fill the basin more than two-thirds. Pour in as much good stock as you can get in, and bake for an hour.

* * * *

"TROUBLED HOUSEWIFE" can't manage to fry fish well. No more can I; but then I am not able to get much practice, unfortunately. You must be careful first that your fish is wiped perfectly dry before you attempt to cook it. If you can afford breadcrumb and egg, mind that you have a stock of browned crumbs finely pounded or grated always by you; these are much better than merely grating a piece of fresh bread. If you are going to use flour only, cover your fish well with it. In fish, as in all other frying, it is imperatively necessary to remember that frying is simply boiling in fat; you must therefore put enough in your pan to cover the fish, and don't put your fish in till the fat is really boiling. Above all, don't let it do gradually by the side of the fire as many a cook seems to delight to do, soaking the whole tissues of the fish with fat. Have a piece of clean whity-brown paper on a common plate when you take the fish up, lay it on the paper before the fire for a few minutes to let the grease dry off, then turn on a dish and serve.

* * * *

"JUSTICE" is down upon me for my letter of last month; he (for I have a suspicion that "JUSTICE" is a man who looked over his wife's shoulder and told her what to write) says that "the girls of the present day are quite conceited enough without E. M. Waterworth making them worse." He thinks that if I had gone on to tell them to make the best of *things* instead of *themselves*, I might have done some good.

Thank you, "JUSTICE," for giving me another text whereon to preach a short sermon. First I venture to say, in spite of all the rubbish that is written and spoken to the contrary, that we live in very good times indeed. Why, ever since the world began I fancy enough has always been just a little more than a man has, and that it only needed something to be past and gone for some one to get up and sing its praises. From the time when the Israelites grumbled at their troubles in the wilderness, and cast longing thoughts to the flesh-pots of Egypt (with slavery, forsooth) which they had left behind, right away through the ages, there have been people like our correspondent "JUSTICE" who have perferred to praise the times that were past to making the best of things in the present. Depend upon it, if the world lasts another century there will be hundreds who will talk to their children of "the good old days," meaning those of which some of us are now complaining. Of course, we ought to make the best of things. If we will only look honestly on our lives we shall find many, many things to be thankful for; and if things go so badly with us that we really cannot feel that, the best thing is to turn our minds to some one else's troubles and difficulties, and we shall soon find that things aren't as bad as they might be, after all. There's a cross in every lot, I know, but there are blessings attached to every cross borne patiently for the Lord's sake, and the blessings far outnumber the crosses. So when we are weary because of the way, let us be patient with ourselves and with others and make the best of everything.

* * * *

There is a poem by the author of that beautiful book, "John Halifax, Gentleman" (he, by the way, made the best of everything), which puts the whole matter so much better than I can, that I must quote it for our motto this month.

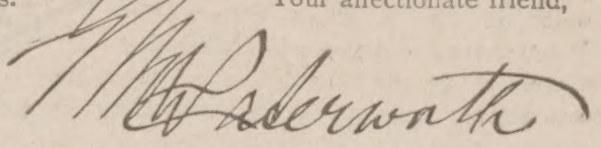
It is written on the Russian proverb which says, "Two hands upon the breast and labour is past."

"Two hands upon the breast,
And labour's done;
Two pale feet cross'd in rest,
The race is won;
Two eyes with coin-weights shut,
And all tears cease;
Two lips where grief is mute,
Anger at peace."
So pray we oftentimes, mourning our lot:
God in His kindness answereth not.

"Two hands to work addrest
Aye for His praise;
Two feet that never rest,
Walking His ways;
Two eyes that look above
Through all their tears;
Two lips still breathing love,
Not wrath nor fears."
So pray we afterwards, low on our knees,
"Pardon those erring prayers. Father, hear these!"

That's what I mean by making the best of things.

Your affectionate friend,



A HAVEN FROM HOME.

BY MAY CUMBERLAND.

At the Doors of the Nursery.

SEATED warm and happy in your cosy nursery, watching the merry play and the lively chatter of the little ones, and the toddling footsteps of baby, does it ever occur to you, dear mother, to wonder how the multitudes of children in the dark East End of London manage to struggle through that most trying period of existence—babyhood?

There are mothers who, to keep a roof over their heads, must leave their tiny ones day by day, and go forth to the vast centres of the sweating system, to labour, for a pay almost horrible to think of, at their work of tailoresses, or to their daily toil in the great factories which hedge in their homes.

How, do you suppose, can those poor women, whose babies are just as precious in their eyes and God's as are yours to you, leave them utterly uncared for and unprotected?

Is nothing done to guard these little lives?

I want you to come with me to St. Paul's Nursery, in Wellclose Square (in connection with St. Paul's, Dock Street), Whitechapel, and you will realise that there are people—though, alas! they are few and far between—who devote their lives to the good of the poor, and even the tiny babies are not forgotten.

Right in the centre of terrible slums it lies, close to the London Docks, surrounded by the great tailoring warehouses and the numerous factories where the women find work, and the Docks, where so many men wait for the work which is so long in coming.

It is one of a block of several buildings, standing in the centre of an enclosure of one acre of turf and trees, all devoted to different charitable objects, and all managed carefully and well by the Rev. Dan Greatorex, who labours for the poor of this district with heart and soul.

Seeing in his work among the very poor how terribly the babies were neglected, and the many deaths that ensued in consequence, he, after great difficulty, built the St. Paul's Nursery, near to his church, and on June 23rd, 1874, it was opened by their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. You can understand, of course, the object of this institution; but I want you to see how a day there is spent, and realise for yourself the great good that is done.

It is eight o'clock in the morning, and we stand at the hall door with the Superintendent, Miss Forrester, and the two nurses. There is no need to wait, for the step is already crowded with anxious mothers, hurrying to leave their little ones in safety while they themselves are at work.

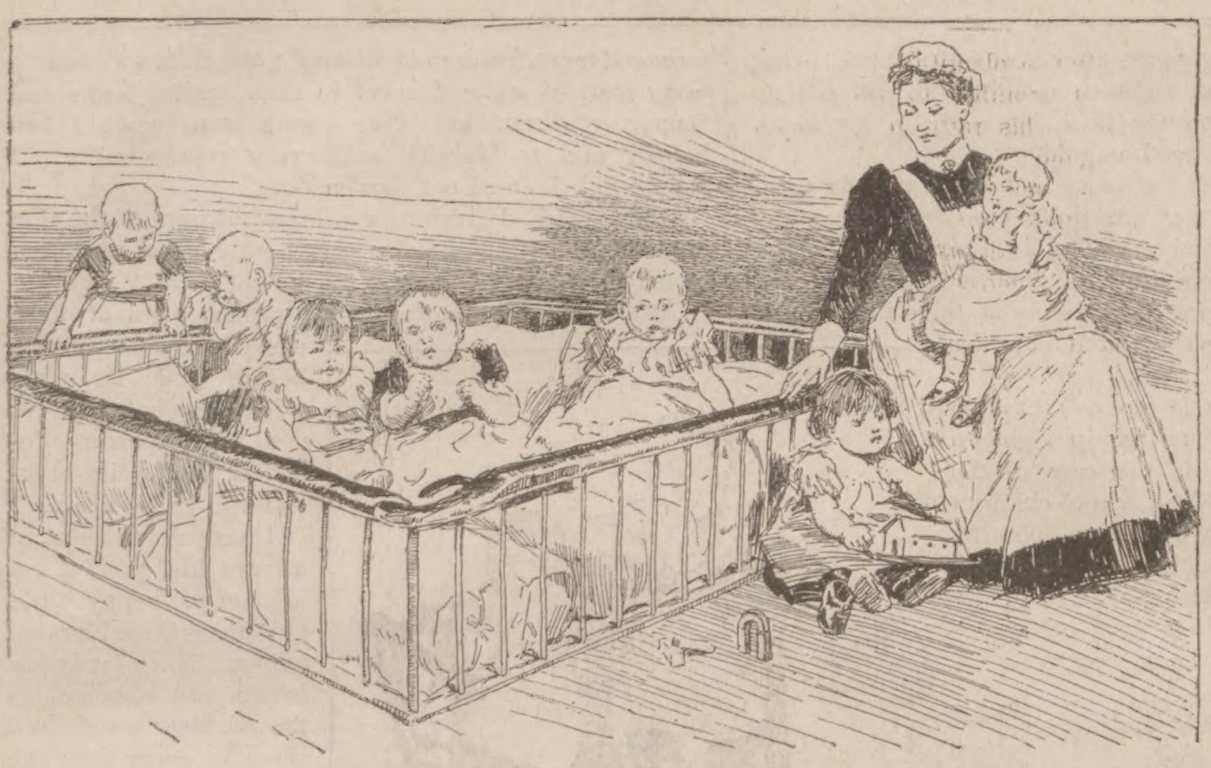
At eight o'clock punctually they must arrive, for the day's work would never be done, were the nurses continually running down to let in fresh babies.

Here the mothers are, impatient to be gone, mites of all ages in their arms and clinging to their skirts.

The little ones are received from the age of one month to three years; after that age they are sent to the infant school adjoining, but use the nursery between hours.

One can see how the small charges are treated by the ready way they leave their mothers' side and run to the nurses, and the contented coo with which the babies nestle in the fresh arms.

Darlings at Dinner.



A Happy Time in the "Fold."

We leave the hall below now empty, and go up the flight of broad steps into the actual nursery above.

It is a large, sunny room, with six or eight windows, the walls covered with nursery pictures and the sweet old Bible scenes; a bright fire burns in the grate, closed in with a high guard. Slung round the walls of the place are the cots, for all the world like huge bags with yawning mouths, only these bags are made of strong white linen, to enable them to be frequently washed. On a pillow at the bottom of the cot lies the baby, comfortably tucked in with a blanket and quilt, and I thought that one of the most charming sights I had ever seen was the row of tiny cots with the little sleeping faces.

"How many children do you consider you have attending regularly?" I asked.

"Well, from thirty to forty; we haven't room for many more."

"Do the mothers seem to appreciate this home for their little ones?"

"They say they don't know what they would do without it. Why, the very day after it was opened we were besieged with women eager to leave their little ones to our care. We bring up a whole family sometimes, the mother leaving her five children regularly every morning."

"But does not that cost her a great deal?"

For you must know this crèche is not absolutely free—pauperism is hated by the women hereabouts, poor though they are; and if only a small sum is asked they are far happier, feeling they are actually keeping their children themselves.

Threepence a day is charged for each child, or one shilling a week; this, of course, includes food, and if you only saw the bairnies eat, you would know what a little way the money goes—especially if you have a big family.

The children who have been racing and tearing round the room, playing at all kinds of baby games, begin to look very sleepy, and one by one they are tucked side by side safely into the "fold," which is a large white mattress edged with pillows, placed in the centre of the room, and with a low railing all round it. Into this the mites are popped, and the fold is soon full of sleeping babies, tired out with laughter and play. But presently the tiny occupants of the cots are wide awake, though

Kind Inquiries.

they soon fall asleep again after a plentiful meal. One mite, however, about eighteen months old, will not go to sleep, but sits on the floor, his rattle in his hand, wide awake and as good as gold.

They are not quiet for long; and when an hour or so later a bell rings, they are quite ready to answer the call, which means dinner. The little ones from school have arrived now, and they all stand in a long line, the tiny toddlers clutching desperately at their neighbours' skirts, as they eagerly march into the dining-room.

Here everything is on a Liliputian scale. The tables are barely eighteen inches high, except in the case of the centre one, at which the school children sit. Down the sides of each run tiny forms, with high backs and sides, and it is the funniest sight imaginable to see the mites pushing each other further up, in order to get opposite a plate and mug.

With folded hands and closed eyes they stand up, and led by the elder ones sing grace, the tiniest joining in with "Dad-dad-da," in their efforts to help.

The dinner consists to-day of Irish stew, bread, and potatoes, with rice pudding to follow, the little ones having only bread and gravy. They enjoy their food thoroughly, and I do not wonder, so nice does it look.

Dinner over, they march out again, when all are well washed. The elder ones, after a little play, go down to school, and the rest are soon asleep in the fold again.

The afternoon is soon gone, and presently tea is announced. On ordinary days, this consists of bread-and-butter, and bread and jam with tea for the elder ones, and milk for the babies; but to-night is a festive one, and cakes, sweets, and biscuits are added to the fare, and more freedom is allowed; the children chatting away merrily, while I revel in their quaint looks and funny little remarks. One young man, when I had helped him to biscuits, said, very reproachfully, "I should fink I could eat mor'en *free*."

Now, as I had given him at least a dozen of the tiny letter biscuits, the remark was hardly necessary; but he evidently wanted more—and he got them.

After tea came more merry games, then at half-past seven the dressing began, and by eight o'clock the babies were gone, the Nursery deserted, and Miss Forrester at peace again.

A Game on the Rocker.

I have never seen, in all my life, such a set of merry, happy little mortals as these Nursery babies. They love their haven, are obedient to the slightest word, and show in every limb the result of tender care. They are watched over by two doctors, who attend the Nursery regularly, and by the vicar, the Rev. Dan Greatorex, who visits daily. The merry songs, the tiny pieces of poetry the babies utter, all indicate the interest taken in them, and, above all, the baby knowledge of, and love for, "gentle Jesus," and the firm faith they have in being "Dod's" children, shows that a higher power than mere human aid watches over and guards the Nursery babies.

The East End is a huge desert, the few earnest workers forming little oases in its dreariness; but one of the brightest spots in that great plain of misery is, to my mind, St. Paul's Nursery, Wellclose Square.

Helps for Busy Housewives.

To Clean Furniture.—First rub with cotton waste, dipped in boiled linseed oil; then rub clean and dry with a soft flannel. Care should be taken that the oil is all removed.

A Good Black Dye for Straw Hats.—Take about half a pound of chip logwood for each hat, and to each half pound add four quarts of soft water, or as much as will cover the hats. Boil them slowly in this for half an hour without bruising the straw; then remove them, add more water and a bit of copperas about the size of a bean for each hat. When quite dissolved, return the hats and simmer for twenty minutes. Lift while simmering to get the air, then remove entirely. Rinse well in plenty of cold water, and hang out in the shade to dry. When ready, stiffen the hats by brushing over with light glue, and when dry, block carefully.

Preserving Newspapers.—Place the copies in regular order and even at the backs and ends, then lay them on the floor, take a good-sized nail, drive it through the whole pile and into the floor within two inches of the upper end, then drive another nail through at the same distance from the lower end, and still another through the middle. Now loosen all from the floor and draw one of the end nails from the papers. Take some binding twine, thread a darning needle, pass it through the hole, draw the middle nail, pass the needle back through that hole, tie the end of the twine and the middle, making a tight stitch. Now draw the other nail, pass the needle through that hole, tie the string to the other stitch, and the file is complete. You have now a handy and valuable volume, instead of a number of loose and littering papers.

Curried Eggs.—Boil half a dozen eggs hard and let them get cold; fry in butter two large onions cut in slices, and let them get quite brown. Season these with pepper and salt, and add a pint of stock. When the onions have stewed for a little while, put in a cup of milk, thickened with arrowroot or flour and flavoured with curry powder, let it simmer, then put in the eggs cut in halves, making them hot, but do not let them boil. The amount of curry powder used is a matter of taste. Garnish the dish with boiled rice, and serve very hot.

Rice Croquettes.—One cup of rice boiled in one pint of milk and one of water until tender. While boiling, add butter the size of an egg, two teaspoonfuls of sugar, three eggs, and the juice and grated peel of one lemon. Mix well, make into rolls a finger long, and dip first into yolks of two eggs well beaten, then into cracker crumbs, and fry in hot lard.

MY HAPPY POSSESSIONS.

BY CHARLOTTE SKINNER, AUTHOR OF "THE MASTER'S MESSAGES," ETC.

II.—MY PROPER PLACE.

MANY of the narrow ideas and aims that we as women often have, are no doubt due to the limited sphere to which for centuries we have been confined. A writer a while ago said it was the Judean rule which had crippled woman in her aspirations. If he meant the Judean rule as enforced in the time of Christ, perhaps he was right; but if he meant the rule of God, we fling back his saying as untrue. He who delivered the children of Israel, "sending before them Moses, Aaron, *and Miriam*"; He who raised up Deborah the Deliverer when there was no man able to deliver; He who taught Huldah the prophetess when there was no man to explain the law, could never have been the Arranger of the place so long assigned to us! Paul's words, "keepers at home," have been often quoted, but his grand acknowledgments of the help received from women are overlooked. People who so often use these words forget that Phœbe was a foreign missionary, and Priscilla a theological professor. When rightly translated they read, "keepers of home," or, according to the Revised Version, "workers at home," and no one has the right to read into the latter translation the word "only," making it, "workers only at home."

An old divine once preaching on woman, quoted the words of the Lord to Abraham, "Where is thy wife?" Abraham answered, "In the tent," "and," added the preacher, "there she ought to be, and the less she is heard outside the better." Some woman in that congregation ought instantly to have risen and asked, how it would have been possible for Sarah to have baked the cakes for her heavenly guests if she had not left her tent?

How could we attend to the sick in hospitals if we never left our homes! The same idea is at the root of this curtailment of our liberty that planned the Eastern seraglio, where women are imprisoned for life. There are other slaves than those with dark faces; there are English slaves, who in return for food and shelter become the property of a man. Our Lord came to set us free, and every woman should rejoice in the liberty He gives us; in Christ Jesus "there is neither male nor female, all one."

Of course, we love to work at home—all true women do. We think of Clara Balfour, the Temperance lecturer in the days when it was considered a dreadful thing for a woman to speak in public, who was found scrubbing a floor when a deputation waited upon her to ask her to speak at a meeting. We think also of Catherine Booth, who often planned her addresses as she was doing her ironing. Many of us would prefer confining our attentions to home if we followed selfish ideas. But there is a great difference between being compelled to do so, and doing so willingly.

Oh, how this taunt, "You should keep in your place at home," has wounded the heart of many a brave woman! Catherine of Siena, who was the forerunner of Elizabeth Fry, of Catherine Booth, and Josephine Butler, had often this taunt to bear. People said she came out and preached her wonderful sermons in order to win the praise of men. In her death agony all these painful memories came back, and in her delirium she wailed, "Never for praise of man, only for the glory of God."

I want to show you the picture of a woman's proper place. I want you to come up the hill of Calvary. There is just light enough to see the three crosses outlined against the sky. We know full well Who hangs on the centre one. The nails are driven through the hands that blessed the little children, and touched the lepers; and the lips that spake such wondrous words are white with agony. And all around, frighted not by the gathering gloom, there is an angry mob. Even now, in their malice, His enemies will not let Him alone, but will hurl their jeers after Him as He descends alone into the valley of death. Oh, that we could keep back that cruel crowd! See that woman's form close by the cross! It is Mary! "*Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother.*"

And that is my place too.

MY PROPER PLACE

is by the Cross of Christ, for only by the Cross am I saved. Its shadow must daily rest over me. *My proper place is where Christ needs me most.* "I'll stand close by Him," I think Mary said, "perhaps He may need me. Perhaps I can reach up and press His throbbing hand." She did not kneel by the cross, but *stood*, ready to help. There is a beautiful story of a bird that had the same desire. Perhaps the little "mariners of the sky" had learnt to love this Man of Sorrows. Maybe, He had let loose many a captive songster, and had so learnt their language; for the old saying is, the birds thus show their gratitude. Seeing the crown of thorns pressing so sorely, the little bird strove to snatch them away. But the more it strove the deeper the thorns pierced its own little breast.

My proper place is where I can witness most for Christ. "At least," Mary would murmur to herself, "I can stand close by His side! These cruel people shall see He has one friend, that at least His earthly mother believes in Him!"

My proper place is where I can best share Christ's sufferings. "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" He had asked a band of men; but this woman watched three hours—hours pressed full with agony. It is quite natural to suppose she stood where she could best meet His glance, so that He might be assured one heart was beating in unison with His. Every spasm of pain which shook the crucified form would send an answering thrill through the mother's heart. Oh, patient sufferer! Yet I often complain when I have but a little share of my Lord's sufferings to bear!

My proper place is where I can best hear Christ's voice. Standing so close by His side, Mary would hear all the words that fell from the Lord's lips. Not one of the disciples caught them all. They were too far away. Only John was near enough to say with certainty where Mary stood. She knew His voice so well. To her—who had known it when it fell upon her ears, first in baby sounds, then in childish accents, then in the

boy's ringing tones, and then in manhood's deep soft notes—it was the sweetest sound on earth, and would be the sweetest sound in heaven. Centuries ago a woman named Hilda, living in Yorkshire, who had gathered round her a band of Christian workers, had a convert named Caedmon. He was one night at a rustic feast, but when his turn came to sing he excused himself and went away. In the night a voice came, "Sing to me, Caedmon," and he answered, "I cannot." It came again, and he asked, "What shall I sing?" and the answer was, "The beginning of all things." He told his dream in the morning to Hilda, and she said, "It is the voice of the Lord." Then she translated for him some verses from the Latin Bible, and he put them into English poetry. This was the beginning of our English Bible, and if Caedmon was the father of our English Bible, Hilda was the mother, for it was she who recognised the voice of the Lord and realised what He wished done.

Oh for the ear attuned to catch His slightest whisper!

My proper place is where I can best win Christ's smile of recognition. Gazing up into His face, listening to His voice, Mary was at last made glad by the fact of recognition. He was conscious she was still with Him! He had still strength enough left to show how tenderly He cared for her. She had cared for Him in infancy, had been faithful to Him in His humiliation, and now He cares for her in return, and home and love are provided. The story of the little bird goes on to say that when, with breast all torn with its vain endeavours, it caught sight of an upward glance of the languid eyes, filled with dumb, sad thanks, it flew away trilling a happy song. And think you that Mary herself, in spite of her grief, did not feel again inclined to sing her old song, "He hath filled the hungry with good things"?

There is no spot under God's sky where, if my Master directs me to it, I—as a saved woman, a woman who is ready, a witnessing woman, a sympathising woman, a woman messenger having hearkened to His words, and a glad-hearted woman having caught His smile—may not go, and there be in my proper place. On the deck amongst the sailors with a Miss Roberts, on the battlefield with a Miss Nightingale, amongst the heathen with a Mrs. Judson, amongst the prisoners with a Mrs. Fry, amongst destitute children with a Miss Carpenter, on the floor of the House of Lords with a Lady Russell pleading for her husband—anywhere where He may lead!

My sisters, I do ask you, in the name of Christ our Lord, to loose your cords and stretch your tents. Take in a wider view! Many a time you may see a mother standing at her door shading her eyes with her hands, and she has just vision enough to see her own little brood coming safely home, and then she turns indoors satisfied. Oh, put down the hand and look all round! The world is so big, its sins and sorrows so sore; it needs large hearts to help it. When you shut your own loved ones in, so many are out in the cold. Surely every woman has some piece of work to do *outside* her own home, if it is only a little place! Our liberty was bought at a tremendous price; ought we not, then, to value it? Ought we not to be willing to throw on one side all conventional habits, old-world customs and restrictions, and go forth blessedly free?

"But," said a woman to me the other week, a rich woman with servants, "I take no interest in anything outside home. I have no time for reading. My children and my home occupy my time fully." Oh, narrow mind! oh, narrow heart! No wish to make the outside world brighter and better, even for her own children's sake, when their time comes to enter it!

Oh, heart of mine, grow big for Christ's sake and His world! May I be strong enough in Christ's strength to put far from me earthly restriction, if only I may fill the place He has planned for me! Clinging to His cross through life, may at last my place be found amongst the ransomed at His side!

A KINDLY DEED.

ONE bright spring morning, a poor woman entered a heavily-laden tram-car in one of our large cities. Besides her large market basket, she had two small children, hardly more than babies. A glance at her careworn face and the shabby, although clean, attire of herself and the children told, at a glance, of many a struggle with poverty.

She was evidently on her way to market, and having no one to leave the babies with at home, had been forced to take them with her. Perhaps this had been the case before, for with a glance at the "rules and regulations"—which stated that children, except infants in arms, must be paid for—she put her basket on the floor in front of her, and took both the children in her arms for the long, weary ride.

Shortly afterwards there entered the car two daintily-dressed school-girls, as fresh as the bright morning itself. Their merry faces sent a thrill of pleasure to the hearts of the other passengers, so much of youth's buoyancy and happiness did they seem to bring with them.

They found seats next to the poor woman, and after a minute or two the one nearest said to her, "Let me hold the little boy for you," at the same time transferring the warm little bundle of humanity from the overcrowded mother's lap to her own.

The words were spoken so gently, and accompanied by a smile so winning, that the little fellow made no objection, but was happy and contented throughout the journey, especially when a rosy-cheeked apple from a pretty basket the girl was carrying found its way into his tiny hands.

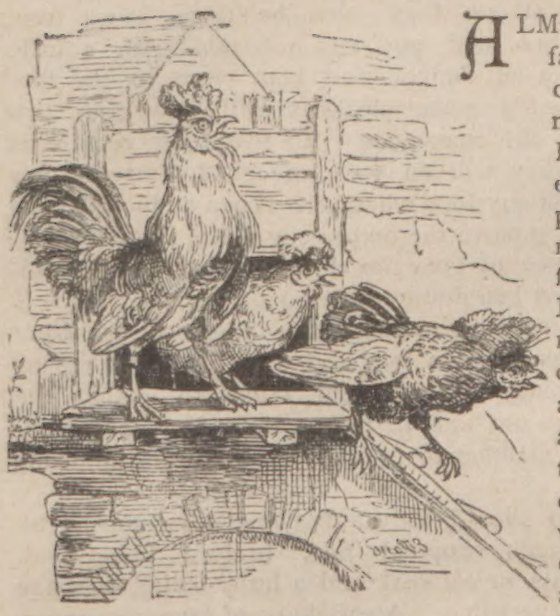
The woman's grateful "Thank you!" as she left the car showed that not only were the weary arms rested, but the heart cheered by the little act of thoughtfulness.

"What made you do that, Ruth?" asked her companion. "See how he has messed your nice, clean dress! It would have been so much easier to have paid his fare and let him have a seat."

"Yes," said Ruth, "it would have been easier, but I don't think it would have been so kind."

"God bless her!" exclaimed an old gentleman, as the corner was reached where the girls got off to go to school; "God bless her, and may she long live to make the world brighter by her kind acts!"

HOW TO START A POULTRY YARD.



"Good Morning!"

ALMOST every family is a consumer, more or less largely, of eggs, and few persons have not a liking for poultry. But eggs are not always obtainable in abundance, and if fresh they are expensive; while fowls as ordinary food are generally too costly for the thrifty mother. Why not, then, turn poultry keeper yourself? To many a home-tied woman the keeping of fowls would prove a most interesting hobby, besides being a remunerative one. We purpose giving a few practical hints on this subject, which our readers may find useful and worth putting into practice.

The first thing to be done is to select a site for the fowl-house. We will suppose that we have only a small outlet of some eighteen or twenty feet in the rear of our premises. In that space a sufficient "run" may be made for half a dozen fowls. The house should be, if possible, in the angle of two walls, as such a position economises material and time in erecting. Any handy, ingenious man of the family could make the house, and a minute description of its construction is scarcely necessary. The materials required are simple and inexpensive—a few posts for uprights, some thin pieces of wood for rafters, a few yards of cheap roofing felt, about half a dozen or a dozen yards of wire netting, and an orange-box or two would be plenty of material for the purpose.

The floor of the fowl-house should be made of coarse gravel, rammed and beaten very hard. An egg-box, divided into four or five compartments, should be placed on four bricks (to keep it from the damp), as nests for the fowls to lay their eggs in. Clean straw should be placed at the bottom of each, and, when necessary, replaced.

Cleanliness in a fowl-house is an indispensable requisite. The fountain for their water should be refilled twice a day, and if pans are used, as is necessary sometimes when boiled food is given them, these pans must be scalded out at least twice a week to prevent the food becoming sour, and so causing illness amongst the feathered pets.

Keep out damp. A warm, comfortable house tends as much to the regular supply of eggs as does proper

Maternal Cares.

feeding, but both are absolutely necessary. Perches about 1½ inches square must be nailed inside, not too far from the ground, and sufficiently strong to hold a good-sized, heavy fowl. The "run" is made by fastening the wire netting to posts driven at equal distances between the fowl-house and the wall.

It will be necessary, when the fowl-house is occupied, to throw in pieces of old mortar to the run, and also some small gravel. The former assists in the formation of shell, the latter is necessary for digestive purposes. It is also advisable to have a day shelter for the fowls. Nail a piece of thin board against the wall at the side and end of the lower extremity of the run, having a fall about two inches to the outside of it.

Having completed your house, procure some fowls to occupy it. There are very many varieties—Dorkings, Spanish, Minorca, and others. We will suppose that Dorkings are chosen. They are good layers, the eggs rich and large, and the hens as good and useful fowls as anyone need wish to keep.

For the size run made, one male bird and five hens are all that can be accommodated. The selection of these should be very carefully made. Birds hatched in the latter end of March are the best to procure, as they will commence laying when eggs are scarce and dear.

One advantage in the Dorking hen is that she makes a most excellent mother, and does not mind confinement, whereas the Cochin must roam about for its food. The chickens, too, are easily reared, and make good table birds very early.

At this point the reader may ask, What must be done to obtain a brood of chicks? Rearing is a very interesting and by no means difficult part of poultry keeping. Find a hen that wants to sit, and prepare a nice, comfortable nest for her—an old box does very well. About five inches up nail a piece of wood across to prevent the nest from being scratched out from the bottom of the box, place some straw which has been well worked in the hand to render it soft (or hay will do as well), and in this nest put nine, eleven, or thirteen eggs, as you may consider the fowl capable of covering *thoroughly*. Let the hen become settled to her nest before the eggs are placed in it. She may appear strange at first, but the determined sitter will not long be debarred from what seems to us her most unpleasant occupation of sitting cooped up for three weeks, which is about the time that will expire before the chickens are hatched. If the weather be cold it may be a day or two longer; but twenty-one days for a hen is the usual time.

Should any of the chickens break through the shell before the others, they must be taken away from under the hen, and put into a basket with a little hay or piece of flannel, and kept close to the fire. Very frequently some chickens will come out two days before the remainder. All that these require is warmth. They will do well enough for twenty-four hours without any food whatever. When all the chickens are hatched, remove the empty egg-shells from the nest, and commence to give the chickens food, having previously moved hen and chickens under a coop, which is made very simply by nailing a few laths over the front side of a box about a foot and a half square, leaving sufficient space between the laths to enable the chickens to go out and in to get their food, and sufficiently close together to prevent the hen from following them.

Their food should, for the first few days, consist of hard-boiled eggs chopped fine, bruised hemp-seed, Embden groats or oatmeal, and a little boiled cabbage leaf chopped very fine. A sprinkling of cayenne pepper, if the weather is very cold, is of great advantage. The food should be put on a flat board close to the coop, but out of the hen's reach. We must allow our little chickens to remain at liberty, giving them corn as well as other food for a month or six weeks.

To ensure success in chicken rearing, as in any other occupation, one person alone should take the sole charge.

We have bred and reared fowls ourselves for years, and have tried many varieties. The Dorkings, pure and simple, were our favourite birds, and the food we fed them on, when laying, consisted of barley, buck-wheat, wheat and maize. Too much buck-wheat is very injurious to poultry, but for sluggish hens it is an admirable food in starting them, and causing them to continue laying.

When roaming about, the food should be nourishing and good, and in addition to the hard corn above mentioned, they should be given every night when going to roost, a good supper of stiff barley-meal. Then there are the many scraps from the table, which go a long way in feeding poultry.

Our space has permitted but a few brief hints on this interesting occupation of poultry keeping, but we hope enough has been said to cause many lady-readers to attempt to provide their own poultry and eggs—the latter an indispensable article of diet for children—in the future.

"UNCERTAIN COMFORTS."

BY JENNIE PERRETT.

"I AM always anxious about my children," said a mother one day.

Poor, desponding, troubled mother! Evidently she believed implicitly in the old saying that "Children are certain cares, but uncertain comforts." Not much joy could she derive from the society of the little ones who were entrusted to her care, so extremely anxious was she with regard to their present and future welfare.

Years have passed since then, fair flowers planted by loving hands bloom on that mother's grave, and strangers minister to the needs of the children about whom she was "so anxious."

Of what avail her anxious care? Of what avail any undue anxiety about our children? When shall we learn that the present alone is ours, and that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"?

How many of the joys life has in store for us we miss! how we mar the harmony and lessen the brightness by clinging persistently to our fears and forebodings! We fail to see the sunshine that falls

upon our path to-day, so anxiously are we watching for the shadow we expect to find there on the morrow.

Sunny faces, happy voices, gladden and beautify our homes; bright eyes and rosy lips appeal to us for counsel, help, and sympathy. Readily, willingly let us respond to these appeals, and put away our care and anxiety.

Though not unduly anxious, it behoves us to be ever watchful with regard to those entrusted to our care, remembering always that "small faults indulged are little thieves that let in greater;" also that "if good we plant not, vice will fill the place."

The active, restless brain, the eager, inquiring mind, the busy hands, all must be kept employed if we are striving to promote our children's welfare. This implies thought, power, action; work that, if rightly done, will leave but little time for mournful forebodings with regard to the future.

There may be some philosophy, but there seems to be no tenderness in the old saying we have quoted; the spirit of true, deep, boundless love would reverse it and say, "Children are certain comforts, but uncertain cares."

"Comforts"? Yes, their very presence is, or ought to be, a joy to every right-minded individual. For our own part, we frankly admit that we are always dubious about those persons occasionally met with in society, who acknowledge that they have no love for children.

Love is theirs by right, by inheritance; the greatest Teacher the world ever knew recognised this fact, and taught it to His disciples.

"Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not," Christ said.

In humble imitation of so lofty an example, we should ever "suffer" the little ones—that is, bear with, hope for, believe in them.

Confidence begets confidence; have faith in children, and you will rarely find your trust abused. A child resents a suspicious, mistrustful individual, and will seldom reveal the better and brighter side of his or her nature to such a one.

"Be patient, and you shall have patient children," said a wise old woman to a tired, careworn mother one day.

The mother acted upon the advice; she restrained and held her feelings in check; she suffered no hasty, unguarded word to fall from her lips; she took time to inquire into, and managed amicably to settle all the childish disputes. The result was that order reigned instead of confusion, peace instead of strife; almost unconsciously the children followed the mother's example; her patience called forth theirs.

Wonderful imitators are these little ones; nothing escapes their notice, no act is too small or insignificant to attract their attention, and seldom do they forget anything they, for reasons of their own, are wishful to remember.

Sometimes, however, we meet with children who, so far from imitating those around them, seem to differ from them in every respect. Their wills are strong, their natures self-assertive, resembling the sturdy oak more than the clinging ivy. Such characters are always powerful for good or evil, and require special tact and care. It is impossible to deal fairly and honestly with these natures without striving to enter into and fully comprehend their peculiarities. Their strongly-marked tendencies lead them ever to extremes, and they often pass heedlessly by the paths of peace in which others of their own age are walking happily. Uncared for, misunderstood, these peculiar temperaments often bring discord into their homes. But let an ardent, enthusiastic lover of children be entrusted with the care and training of such a one, and the discord will be changed to harmony.

Love begets love; a child, however peculiar in other respects, is more or less responsive to affection, and by the power of love may be won, and kept, and guided.

"THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS."

WITHIN a small and humble shell
My daily lot is cast,
Where boomings of the ocean wave
Just reach me on the blast.
The storms that shake the forest trees
Scarce stir the air for me;
For the corner where my life is spent
Holds little that is free.

I cannot soar to mountain heights,
Where men of genius shine;
I may not range 'mid far-off tribes,
To free the slaves that pine;
Nor can I sweep the social air
With my unnoted name,
Or cause the face of violence
To blush, with well-earn'd shame.

But I can speak a kindly word
To some dejected soul;
And keep my nut-shell open wide,
When the glad sunbeams roll.
And I may shed an influence blest
On all around my way,
And drop small germs of happiness
On those that nearest lay.

Then, should my lot hereafter spread,
And grow a circle wide,
My life's broad stream shall learn to bear
True blessings on its tide.
I shall not plunge around the rocks,
Where unknown dangers sleep,
But mirror, in the light of day,
Heaven's image clear and deep. J. A.

The Mother's Helper.—An old mother who had reared a large family was commended for her success in bringing them up so well. "Hush," she said hastily and earnestly, "I felt so incompetent that I trusted in God. He did the work, and now I feel that it would be ignoble in me to allow you to commend me for what He has done." Trust in Him and He shall "bring it to pass." Give Him your heart and home, that He may be the ruler of your household. The mother who has God for her Helper has ever near a never-failing source of strength for the hardest parental duties.

HINTS ON HOME DRESSMAKING.

BY A PRACTICAL DRESSMAKER.

IT is predicted that ere long there will be some very radical changes in fashion. Consequently, those of our readers who are anxious to keep up to date, will do well to defer the purchase of new garments until the said changes appear. In the meantime, dress skirts are made quite full at the back, and many ladies are wearing full flounced petticoats underneath, so as to hold the dress skirt out. Dress sleeves are worn moderately large, and there are many varieties of the so-called leg-of-mutton shape. One has two pointed ends arranged like a handkerchief; another has the fulness below the elbow folded in a pleat down the centre of the arm and secured with three large buttons.

Fig. 8.

For some months past a great effort has been made to introduce large bonnets. These are now gaining upon us rapidly, and before long we shall find our ears entirely covered in a close-fitting cottage bonnet, or one with a poke in front.

Hats are worn in all sizes, from the Gainsborough to the close-fitting toque shape or the Toreador felt.

Feathers are used in great profusion for millinery purposes. Those of good quality are expensive in the first place, but they can be used again and again, as they dye or clean and look as good as new.

Shot silks and stuffs are still very fashionable, especially for trimmings. Moiré is fast becoming a thing of the past, but there are many patterns in granites and cross-barred silk which seem to be taking its place.

Fig. 9.

Blouse bodices in all sorts of material and shapes are still very fashionable; indeed, it is quite in keeping to have bodice and skirt of different stuff. However, they must be made full and fussy-looking.

Fig. 8. This design shows a lady's dress, trimmed with crape for mourning; but the style is equally suitable for any other trimming, such as velvet, silk, or a figured material on a plain one. The body is made to hook down the centre, and then to button over double-breasted on the left side. A rever is made to join the collar, which falls from the neck, and should have a piece of stiff muslin placed between the material and the lining. It will be found best to make the plastron front separate, so that it can be renewed or worn in change with others to gain a variety. The sleeve is finished with a tight-fitting cuff, while a narrow basque completes the waist. The skirt is plain, falling in full pleats down the centre of the back, and has a crossway fold at the bottom, about twelve inches deep. A much narrower one would answer as well, and should be set on a few inches from the edge of the skirt.

Fig. 10.

Fig. 9. Here we show one of the new circular capes. The season is rather far advanced for velvet or plush, but there are some very pretty shades shown in plain and fancy habit cloth. The edges can be turned under and stitched, and the over-cape can be trimmed with lace, gimp, or ribbon. Braid is also used for ornamenting capes of this description.

Fig. 10. This is a little girl's pinafore of quite a new shape, the long yoke being suitable to wear over one of the short-waisted bodices now so fashionable for little ones. Fancy muslin is the material used, and the front of the yoke is made with bands of insertion, feather stitched together. A deep frill of muslin trimmed with insertion is gathered and set on round the armholes, and a little gathered frill finishes the bottom of the yoke. The skirt is hemmed and tucked. One and a half yards of muslin will make a pinafore for a child of six years of age.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Figs. 8 and 9, 6½d. each; fig. 10, 4½d. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.